UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

Annual Compliance Review, 2022   Docket No. ACR2022

CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATION REQUEST NO. 19

(Issued March 20, 2023)

To clarify the Postal Service's FY 2022 Annual Performance Report (*FY 2022 Report*) and FY 2023 Annual Performance Plan (*FY 2023 Plan*),[1] the Postal Service is requested to provide written responses to the following requests. Answers should be provided to individual requests as soon as they are developed, but no later than March 27, 2023.

High-Quality Service

1.   In discussing actions to achieve the High-Quality Service goal in FY 2023, the Postal Service states that it plans to "[m]oderniz[e its] . . . technologies," to invest in "[o]perational technologies that will grow [its] enterprise analytics and real-time data collection capabilities[,]" and to take steps to "enable advanced parcel automation[.]"[2]

        a.   Please discuss the extent to which such technology modernization and investment may include technologies incorporating, or otherwise using, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

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[1] The *FY 2022 Report* and *FY 2023 Plan* are included in the Postal Service's FY 2022 *Annual Report to Congress*, which the Postal Service filed with the FY 2022 *Annual Compliance Report*. *See* Library Reference USPS-FY22-17, December 29, 2022, folder "USPS-FY22-17," folder "FY22.17.Annual.Report," file "FY 2022 Annual Report to Congress.pdf" (*FY 2022 Annual Report*).

[2] *FY 2022 Annual Report* at 36; *see* Library Reference USPS-FY22-NP31, folder "Rule 3050.55 Cost Reduction;" Yevgeniy Sverdlik, "How the US Postal Service Is Using AI at the Edge to Improve Mail," DataCenterKnowledge.com, May 6, 2021, available at *https://www.datacenterknowledge.com/machine-learning/how-us-postal-service-using-ai-edge-improve-mail*.

b.   Please discuss the Postal Service's general practices for considering whether to incorporate or otherwise use AI technologies when enhancing its sorting, processing, and other operations or when investing in new equipment and systems.

2.   In discussing actions that it will pursue to achieve the High-Quality Service goal in FY 2023, the Postal Service references plans to "[i]nvest[] in new vehicles, equipment, systems, and facilities."[3]

a.   Please discuss the extent to which such new vehicles and systems may include unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), autonomous mobile robots (AMRs), autonomous long-haul vehicles (ALHVs), or comparable systems.

b.   Please discuss any plans the Postal Service may have to evaluate, in FY 2023, the potential implementation of UAVs, AMRs, ALHVs, or comparable systems.

c.   Please discuss the extent to which the new vehicles and systems in which the Postal Service plans to invest otherwise may make use of level 3 or higher automation technologies (*i.e.,* technologies beyond cruise control (or comparable speed regulation) and driver assistance). *See* OIG Report No. RARC-WP-18-006 at 5.

d.   To what extent does the Postal Service currently plan to explore using autonomous vehicle technology to improve service quality, efficiency, and/or employee safety? Please describe such plans and identify any

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[3] *FY 2022 Annual Report* at 35; *see id.* at 36-37; Library Reference USPS-FY22-NP31, folder "Rule 3050.55 Cost Reduction"; *see also* United States Postal Service, Office of the Inspector General ("OIG"), Report No. RISC-WP-21-007, *Step into Tomorrow: The U.S. Postal Service and Emerging Technology*, Aug. 26, 2021, at 10-11, available at, *https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/USPS/RISC-WP-21-007.pdf* (describing the Postal Service's 2019 Request for Information about the use of UAVs in delivery and its successful 2019 pilot test of autonomous long-haul transport vehicles); OIG Report No. RARC-WP-18-006, *Autonomous Mobile Robots and the Postal Service*, Apr. 9, 2018, at 5, 9-12, available at *https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/RARC-WP-18-006.pdf* (OIG Report No. RARC-WP-18-006) (describing experimentation by foreign postal operators and U.S. delivery providers with AMRs); OIG Report No. RARC-WP-18-001, *Autonomous Vehicles for the Postal Service*, Oct. 2, 2017, available at *https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2023-01/RARC-WP-18-001.pdf* (identifying various potential use cases for autonomous vehicles in Postal Service operations)*.*

relevant materials in Library Reference USPS-FY22-NP31 or otherwise filed in this proceeding.

e. Please provide any studies, analyses, or evaluations that the Postal Service may have prepared regarding any service-performance- or safety-related benefits of using UAVs, AMRs, ALHVs, or automation technologies in its operations.

Excellent Customer Experience

3. In the FY 2022 ACR, the Postal Service states that to help improve customer experience (CX), it developed and implemented an AI ChatBOT on its Facebook Messenger platform to resolve customer issues without agent interaction for basic tasks such as tracking number lookup and stamp prices. FY 2022 ACR at 83.

a. Please confirm that the Postal Service sends a customer satisfaction survey to customers who contact the Postal Service for help via the AI ChatBOT.[4]

b. If confirmed:

i. Please provide all surveys used in FY 2022 to evaluate CX with using the AI ChatBot.

ii. For each survey provided in response to question 3.b.i., please provide: (1) a description of the customer type targeted by the survey, (2) the number of surveys initiated in FY 2022, (3) the number of surveys returned in FY 2022, (4) the average customer satisfaction score in FY 2022, and (5) a tally of the responses to each FY 2022 survey question, disaggregated by each of the possible responses.[5]

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[4] *See D*ocket No. ACR2021, Responses of the United States Postal Service to Questions 1-11 of Chairman's Information Request No. 29, April 25, 2022, question 7.

[5] *See* 39 C.F.R. § 3055.92(b).

    c.   If not confirmed, please explain how the Postal Service evaluated CX for customers who contacted the Postal Service for help via the AI ChatBOT in FY 2022.

4.   In the FY 2022 ACR, the Postal Service states that the AI ChatBOT resolved more than 44,915 customer issues without agent interaction. FY 2022 ACR at 83.

    a.   Please describe how the Postal Service determined whether customer needs were resolved without agent interaction after using the AI ChatBOT to contact the Postal Service for help.

    b.   Please identify the number of AI ChatBOT conversations in FY 2022 that were terminated without agent interaction and without resolving the customer's issue. In the response, please explain whether and how the Postal Service followed up with customers with issues that were not resolved after using the AI ChatBOT. If the Postal Service did not follow up with customers with unresolved issues, please explain why.

    c.   Please estimate the cost to develop and implement the AI ChatBOT.

    d.   Please quantify or estimate the impact of the AI ChatBOT on CX survey results in FY 2022.

    e.   Please describe any lessons learned from using the AI ChatBOT in FY 2022 and any plans to improve the AI ChatBOT's efficacy in FY 2023.

5.   Please describe any other AI-based resources or tools that the Postal Service developed or implemented during FY 2022 to help meet the Excellent Customer Experience performance goal. In the response, please explain how each AI resource or tool helped customers address their issues or inquiries.

6.   Please refer to the other AI-based resources or tools provided in response to question 5. For each AI-based resource or tool, please provide:

    a.   The total number of interactions handled with customers in FY 2022.

b.   The number of interactions that resolved the customer's issue without contacting a live agent.

c.   An estimate of the impact on CX survey results in FY 2022.

d.   Any lessons learned from using the AI resource or tool in FY 2022 and any plans to improve the resource or tool's efficacy in FY 2023.

7.   Please describe any plans to develop and/or implement other AI-based resources and tools to help improve CX in FY 2023 and future years.

By the Chairman.

Michael Kubayanda